

▼ DOW 30,924.14 -345.95	▼ NASDAQ 12,723.47 -274.28	▼ S&P 500 3,768.47 -51.25	▲ 30-YR T-BOND 2.31% +0.06	▲ CRUDE OIL \$63.83 +2.55	▼ GOLD \$1,700.20 -15.10	▼ SILVER \$25.43 -.93	▼ EURO \$1.1966 -.0100
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BRIEFING

US jobless claims tick up to 745,000

The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits edged higher last week to 745,000, a sign that many employers continue to cut jobs despite a drop in confirmed viral infections and evidence that the overall economy is improving.

Thursday's report from the Labor Department showed that jobless claims rose by 9,000 from the previous week. Though the pace of layoffs has eased since the year began, they remain high by historical standards. Before the virus flattened the U.S. economy a year ago, applications for unemployment aid had never topped 700,000 in any week, even during the Great Recession.

All told, 4.3 million Americans are receiving traditional state unemployment benefits. Counting supplemental federal unemployment programs that were established to soften the economic damage from the virus, an estimated 18 million people are collecting some form of jobless aid.

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US productivity down 4.2%

U.S. productivity fell at an annual rate of 4.2% in the fourth quarter, the largest quarterly decline in nearly four decades.

The revised figure released Thursday by the Labor Department was slightly smaller than the 4.7% decline estimated a month ago. But it was still the biggest drop since the second quarter of 1981, when productivity fell at a rate of 5.1%.

Labor costs rose at a 6% rate in the fourth quarter, slightly lower than the 6.8% first estimated.

Productivity is the amount of output per hour of work. The revisions reflected the fact that the government made changes to its estimate of gross domestic product, the country's total output of goods and services, to show an increase of 4.1% at an annual rate in the fourth quarter, slightly higher than its initial estimate of 4% growth.

US mortgage rates steady to higher

U.S. long-term mortgage rates were steady to higher this week, as the benchmark 30-year loan breached the 3% mark for the first time since July 2020. Rates remain near historic lows as the economy strains toward recovery in the pandemic's wake.

Mortgage buyer Freddie Mac reported Thursday that the average rate on the 30-year fixed-rate home loan rose to 3.02% from 2.97% last week. By contrast, the benchmark rate stood at 3.29% a year ago.

While economists expect modest increases in home-loan rates this year, they likely will remain low while the Federal Reserve keeps interest rates near zero until the economy recovers.

— Bulletin wire reports

COVID-19 | Oregon Worker Relief Fund

\$10M set for immigrant-owned businesses

JAMIE GOLDBERG

The Oregonian

A state fund set up last year to help workers from immigrant communities will distribute \$10 million to immigrant-owned small businesses across Oregon.

Organizers of the Oregon Worker Relief Fund announced Thursday that they had established a new program, the Oregon Small Enterprise Fund, to

support small-business owners who have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic but have been unable to secure aid through federal programs.

The Oregon Legislature's Emergency Board allocated \$46 million in January to set up the fund and provide support to the Oregon Worker Relief Fund.

Qualifying small-business owners can receive grants between \$7,000 and \$25,000 through the new program.

Qualifying small-business owners can receive grants between \$7,000 and \$25,000 through the new program.

To be eligible, businesses must have experienced a decline in revenue due to the pandemic, be actively operating in Oregon and be at least partially owned

by someone who uses an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number or equivalent to file their taxes. The Internal Revenue Service issues those numbers to people who don't have Social Security numbers.

Businesses that received funds from the federal government's Paycheck Protection Program will not be eligible for the state-backed grants.

See **Immigrants** / A8



Radicchio is the focus of a new effort to spark interest in the vegetable from farmers, chefs and consumers.

Pacific Northwest Radicchio Association hopes to increase vegetable's popularity

BY MATTHEW WEAVER

Capital Press

Siri Erickson-Brown first fell in love with radicchio while she and her husband were working on farms in Europe in the early 2000s.

They ate a lot of the red winter vegetable while in Italy, where it is commonly grown. Erickson-Brown was intrigued.

"What is this weird vegetable that everybody says is so hard to grow?" she recalled wondering.

Radicchio is a leafy chicory, often used to add color to salads.

Photos: Shawn Linehan/Culinary Breeding Network/capitalpress.com

And, by all accounts, radicchio is an acquired taste. It's bitter, which means customers need some education and recipe examples from chefs, said Laura Lewis, who runs Washington State University's Food Systems Program.

"You may not necessarily want to have a straight-up radicchio salad," Lewis said. "But there are some beautiful radicchio salads that you mix with things like citrus."

Erickson-Brown compares radicchio to a hoppy beer, dark chocolate or coffee — the taste is hated by kids but loved by adults.

See **Radicchio** / A8

OREGON | WILDFIRE PRICE-GOUGING

4 hotels will pay \$105,600 to settle claims

MIKE ROGOWAY

The Oregonian

Four Oregon hotels will pay \$105,600 in penalties and reimburse at least 100 customers to settle allegations of price gouging during September's wildfires.

The fires burned more than 1 million acres and forced thousands of Oregonians from their homes, many of whom fled to hotels that had been nearly empty because of the pandemic. Some people reported sharply higher hotel prices, though, and Gov. Kate Brown issued a directive to crack down on price gouging.

Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum said Thursday that four hotels have agreed to settle price-gouging allegations by paying financial penalties:

- Capital Inn & Suites (Salem): The Department of Justice says this hotel typically charged \$60 to \$80 a night for rooms but was charging as much as \$146 during the wildfires.

- Capital Inn has already refunded \$1,342 to customers during the wildfire and has agreed to reimburse anyone else who paid more than \$92 a night during the wildfires. The hotel will also pay a \$38,000 penalty to the state.

- Le Chateau Inn (Florence): The hotel typically charged \$89 to \$125 nightly, according to the department, but raised rates more than 15% for at least 18 rooms during the wildfires.

See **Hotels** / A8

Company behind Jordan Cove downgrades project

VICKIE ALDOUS

Mail Tribune (Medford)

The Canadian company proposing a natural gas pipeline and export facility in Southern Oregon has downgraded the financial value of the project after announcing it can't predict when it might be built.

Pembina reported a \$1.6 billion downgrade for the Southern Oregon project, known as Jordan Cove, plus two other energy projects.

"We believe the time for these projects may come; however, we can sadly no longer predict with certainty when that time will be and hence were compelled to reflect their impairments in our 2020 financial statements through a non-cash charge," Pembina said recently in a press release



A view of Coos Bay from a spot where the Jordan Cove LNG terminal would be excavated, if approved by regulators.

about its fourth quarter and 2020 financial results.

The company reported a \$1.2 billion loss for the quarter and a \$316 million loss for 2020.

Pembina said it made the ac-

counting change about Jordan Cove's value in light of "current regulatory and political uncertainty."

The company wants to build a 229-mile underground pipeline through Klamath, Jackson,

Douglas and Coos counties to a proposed export terminal near Coos Bay. Canadian and American natural gas would ship overseas to Asian markets.

Pembina has faced a series of regulatory setbacks, including the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's denial of a Clean Water Act permit for the project.

Allie Rosenbluth of Rogue Climate said there is no viable path forward for the project, and Pembina should throw in the towel on a proposal that has faced years of opposition.

She said opponents were excited to see Pembina's announcement that the project's future is uncertain.

"It's the result of so many wins we've seen in the last year," Rosenbluth said of regu-

latory setbacks for the project. "The community will continue to challenge it until it is truly canceled."

Opponents say the project would damage rivers and streams, cause pollution, contribute to climate change by promoting the burning of fossil fuels, and intrude on the rights of landowners along the proposed pipeline route.

Pembina has argued the \$10 billion project would pump money into Oregon's economy, and says that shipping more natural gas to Asia would reduce reliance on coal, which produces more greenhouse gas emissions than natural gas. The company says it has secured agreements to use land from most property owners along the majority of the route.